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The JAWS OF DEATH

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THE JAWS of DEATH

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF JANUARY 1945, THE GREAT GERMAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE IN THE ARDENNES HAD BEEN TURNED AND, DESPITE ARCTIC CONDITIONS AND BITTER OPPPOSITION, THE ANGLO-AMERICAN FORCES WERE STEADILY CARVING THEIR WAY INTO THE ENEMY SALIENT.



The Jaws of Death

Chapter 1. The Troublemakers

IN THE BITING COLD OF A WINTER'S DAWN, THE BATTLE-WEARY VETERANS OF THE 4th FUSILIERS WAITED FOR THE ORDER TO ADVANCE.

FIVE MINUTES TO H-HOUR,
BILL, JERRY'S DUG IN GOOD AND
DEEP AT ROCHEVAL. WE'RE IN FOR
A ROUGH HOUSE THIS TIME!

EVER
KNOWN IT
OTHERWISE,
SIR?



SERGEANT WILLIAM GRANT
GAVE A WRY GRIN AND
TURNED TO THE PLATOON
POSITIONS.

BRADY, QUINCE - WAKE UP,
YOU TWO LAYABOUTS! THE
DIRT STARTS FLYING IN
THREE MINUTES...



The Jaws of Death

5

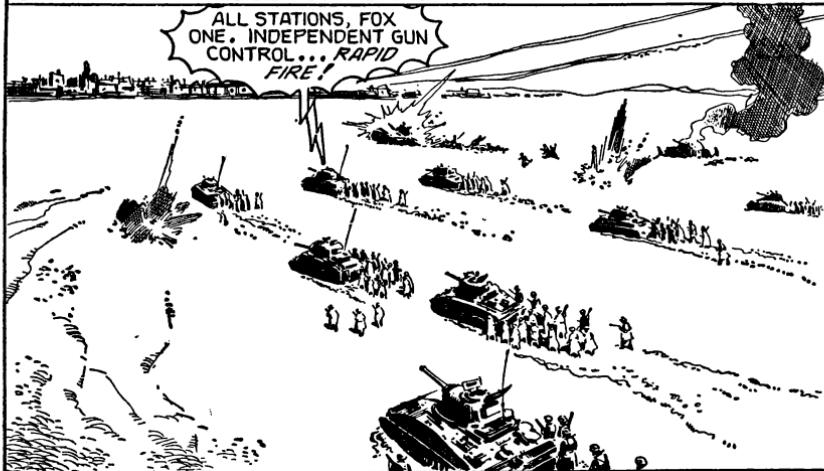
THE LAST SECONDS TICKED BY. A RED VEREY LIGHT SOARED SKYWARDS AND AMERICAN SHERMAN TANKS LURCHED CLUMSILY THROUGH THE BRITISH LINES.



The Jaws of Death

AS THE RANGE CLOSED, THE AIR FILLED WITH THE SHARP RATTLE OF SPANDAUS, PUNCTUATED BY THE VICIOUS COUGH OF ANTI-TANK GUNS. BUT THE RAGGED LINE OF MEN AND MACHINES DID NOT FALTER.

ALL STATIONS, FOX ONE. INDEPENDENT GUN CONTROL... RAPID FIRE!



IT WAS WHEN THREE PLATOON REACHED THE RUBBLE-STREWN OUTSKIRTS OF THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE TOWN THAT THE LEADING SHERMAN HALTED.

HEY, LOOTENANT !
THE KRAUTS GOT THE DROP ON US WITH ONE O' THEIR BIG PEA-SHOOTERS.
CAN YOU NAIL IT FOR US ?

WILCO !
WE'LL MOUSE-HOLE OUR WAY UP THE STREET AND TAKE 'EM FROM THE FLANK.



The Jaws of Death

7

THE VETERANS LISTENED QUIETLY TO LIEUTENANT CLARK'S ORDERS.

THERE'S A JERRY EIGHTY-EIGHT BUNKERED AT THE END OF THE NEXT STREET. WE'LL WORK OUR WAY UP THROUGH THE HOUSES. YOU ALL KNOW THE DRILL ...



WITH EXPERT DEXTERITY, THE PLATOON BLASTED A PATH THROUGH A ROW OF BATTERED HOUSES TOWARDS THE GUN.

CORPORAL TANNER, IF YOU CAN BOUNCE A COUPLE O' PHOSPHORUS BOMBS OFF THAT WALL, WE CAN GO OVER IN THE SMOKE AND GET STUCK IN!



THE GRENADES BURST WITH SAVAGE LICKS OF FLAME, AND THE ROAD FOGGED WITH CLOUDS OF ACRID SMOKE.



The Jaws of Death

THE GERMAN GUNNERS FOUGHT WITH THE FEROCITY OF CORNERED RATS. BUT THEY STOOD NO CHANCE AGAINST THE VETERANS.



WITHIN A FEW MINUTES, THE GUN POSITION WAS TAKEN — BUT DEATH STILL LURKED IN THE RUINS.

NICE TIDY
JOB, BILL. ANY
CASUALTIES?

JACKSON'S
BOUGHT IT, AND —
LOOK OUT, BEHIND
YOU!

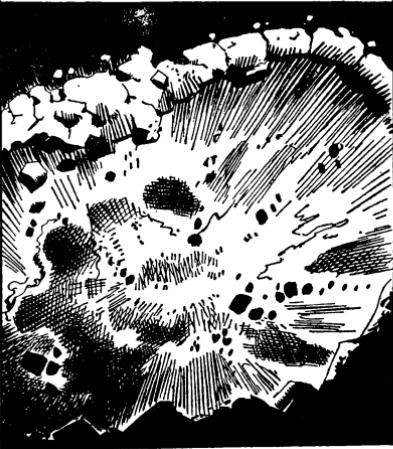


The Jaws of Death

9

LIEUTENANT CLARK'S REACTIONS WERE RAZOR-SHARP, BUT THE BURST FROM HIS THOMPSON WAS NOT QUICK ENOUGH TO STOP THAT LAST GESTURE OF HATRED.

THE LIEUTENANT HAD MADE A DESPERATE BID TO AVERT DISASTER. BUT FOR HIM, THE SANDS OF TIME HAD ALREADY RUN OUT.



FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, THE SERGEANT STARED WITH UNSEEING EYES AT THE CRUMPLED BODY OF HIS OFFICER.

HE ALWAYS USED TO JOKE ABOUT THE TIME WE'D HAVE, WHEN WE REACHED BERLIN. NOW...



The Jaws of Death

THEN THE SERGEANT TOOK A GRIP ON HIMSELF. THE FRONT LINE SOLDIER HAS NO TIME TO MOURN THE DEAD.

NO USE STANDING HERE BROODING, WE'VE STILL GOT A FIGHT ON OUR HANDS. GET THE LADS DUG IN, AND THE CASUALTIES BACK TO THE R.A.P.

OKAY, SARGE!



The Jaws of Death

11



The Jaws of Death

WHEN THE FUSILIERS REACHED A REST CAMP, SERGEANT GRANT CALLED BRADY TO ONE SIDE.



SULLENLY, BRADY SLOUCHED AWAY TO HIS BILLET, WHERE QUINCE SYMPATHISED WITH HIM.



FOR A MOMENT, BRADY HESITATED - BUT QUINCE HAD A GLIB AND PERSUASIVE TONGUE.



The Jaws of Death

13

HALF AN HOUR LATER, THEY WERE SEATED IN THE WARMTH OF A SMALL FRENCH CAFE.



The Jaws of Death

BRADY RETURNED TO CAMP UNDER ESCORT.

SORRY TO DRAG YOU OUT,
SERGEANT - BUT IS THIS
MAN ONE OF YOURS?

HE IS! WHAT THE DEVIL'S
HE BEEN UP TO NOW?



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, SERGEANT GRANT HAD NO TIME TO WORRY
ABOUT BRADY. BEFORE REVEILLE HE WAS AT THE RAIL HEAD TO MEET
HIS NEW PLATOON COMMANDER.

THE NAME'S GRANT,
SIR. I'M YOUR PLATOON
SERGEANT.

PLEAS'D TO MEET
YOU, SERGEANT. I HEAR
YOU'VE HAD A PRETTY
ROUGH TIME. IS THE
PLATOON STILL IN
GOOD SHAPE?



Chapter 2. New Blood

LIEUTENANT MICHAEL WILSON WAS YOUNG, KEEN AND CONFIDENT. FOR HIM, ACTIVE SERVICE STILL HELD AN AURA OF GLAMOUR.

THEY'VE BEEN UP THE SHARP END A LONG TIME, BUT THEY'RE A GOOD BUNCH. OF COURSE, THERE'S ONE OR TWO BAD HATS THAT NEED A HEAVY HAND TO KEEP THEM IN LINE.

ANYONE IN PARTICULAR, SERGEANT?

THERE'S ONE MERCHANT IN THE GUARDROOM RIGHT NOW. FELLOW CALLED BRADY. GOT SHVED UNDER CLOSE ARREST LAST NIGHT. BUT YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, SIR ...

THEY'RE MY MEN NOW, SERGEANT! YOU'D BETTER TELL ME ABOUT HIM.

The Jaws of Death



The Jaws of Death

17

THE YOUNG OFFICER THOUGHTFULLY STUDIED THE HULKING GIANT OF A MAN STANDING BEFORE HIM. SULLEN RESENTMENT WAS STAMPED ON BRADY'S FACE, BUT THERE WAS A LOST INJURED LOOK IN HIS EYES.

STAND EASY, BRADY. I'M YOUR NEW PLATOON COMMANDER. I WANT TO TRY AND SORT OUT THIS MESS YOU'VE LANDED YOURSELF IN.



IT WAS UP-HILL WORK, BREAKING THROUGH BRADY'S NATURAL HOSTILITY AND SUSPICION, BUT LIEUTENANT WILSON WAS PERSISTENT. AFTER SOME TIME, HE GAINED WHAT HE FELT WAS A PARTIAL VICTORY.

RIGHT, THEN, I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO GET YOU OFF THIS FIZZER. BUT I'M COUNTING ON YOU NOT TO LET ME DOWN.

ALL RIGHT, SIR. I'LL HAVE A BASH!



The Jaws of Death

WITH SOME DIFFICULTY, LIEUTENANT WILSON SUCCEEDED IN HAVING THE CHARGE AGAINST BRADY QUASHED. FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, THE STARTLING CHANGE IN THE MAN CAUSED RIBALD COMMENT IN THE BARRACK ROOM.



EVEN THE CASE-HARDENED SERGEANT GRANT WAS IMPRESSED.

MY OATH, JOCK ! I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO MISTER WILSON. WE'LL HAVE BRADY ASKING FOR A TRANSFER TO THE GUARDS THE WAY HE'S CARRYING ON .

OCH, IT'S NO MORE THAN A .FIVE-MINUTE WONDER. THE LÉOPARD DOES NAE CHANGE HIS SPOTS .



The Jaws of Death

19

FOR THE FUSILIERS, THE BRIEF RESPITE FROM WAR WAS OVER. TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER, RE-FITTED AND EQUIPPED, LIEUTENANT WILSON WAS LEADING HIS PLATOON TOWARDS THE DULL MUTTER OF GUNS.

ACTION AT LAST!
CAN'T AFFORD TO SLIP UP ON MY FIRST SHOW.
THEY'VE GOT TO KNOW WHO'S COMMANDING THIS PLATOON.



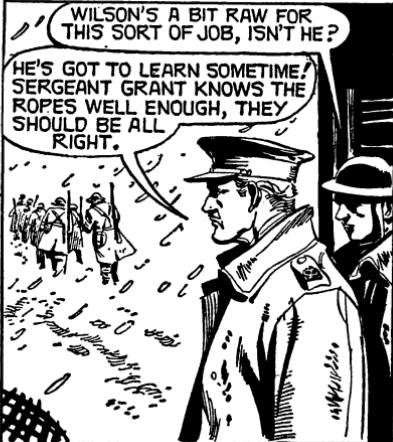
BY MID-DAY, THE BATTALION WAS IN THE FORWARD AREA. AHEAD OF THEM STRETCHED THE HOSTILE WILDERNESS OF NO MAN'S LAND.

THE FRONT'S PRETTY UNSTABLE AND BRIGADE WANT TO KNOW WHERE JERRY IS. YOU'LL EACH RECCOE AN ALLOCATED AREA, GENTLEMEN.

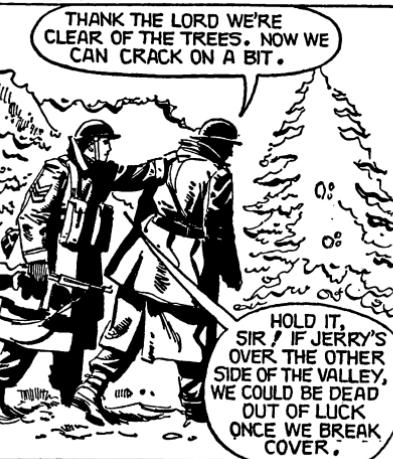


The Jaws of Death

EAGER TO ACQUIT HIMSELF, WILSON SET A BRISK PACE AS HE LED A SECTION OF HIS PLATOON OUT INTO THE DESOLATE COUNTRYSIDE.



FOR THE FIRST HOUR, THE SECTION'S ROUTE LAY THROUGH DENSE CONIFEROUS FOREST.



WILSON GLANCED AT THE LOW, THREATENING SKY. DARKNESS WAS NOT MANY HOURS AWAY.



The Jaws of Death

21

WITH BLEAK EYES, THE SERGEANT SEARCHED THE TERRAIN. NOTHING STIRRED, BUT A SIXTH SENSE CAUSED HIM TO GIVE AN INVOLUNTARY SHIVER.

JOCK, TAKE A BLOKE WITH YOU AND SHOVE OFF UP FRONT. THERE'S NO SIGN O' JERRY, BUT I DON'T LIKE THE SMELL OF IT.

I'LL WATCH IT, SARGE. HEY, BRADY. YOU'VE JUST VOLUNTEERED.

WHAT FOR, CORPORAL?



THE PATROL PUSHED ON, BUT THE SERGEANT'S FEARS HAD NOT BEEN GROUNDLLESS. COLD EYES WATCHED THEIR PROGRESS FROM THE FAR SIDE OF THE VALLEY.

HALTEN! ACHTUNG,
PREPARE FOR ACTION!



The Jaws of Death

WITH A GRIM NOTE OF SATISFACTION, THE NAZI OFFICER BARKED OUT HIS ORDERS.



THE ATTACK CAME WITHOUT WARNING, THE SILENCE BEING SUDDENLY SHATTERED BY THE STACCATO DEATH RATTLE OF THE MACHINE GUN.



The Jaws of Death

23

WITH THE BRITISH PINNED HELPLESSLY TO THE GROUND, THE GERMANS SWARMED DOWN TO THE FLOOR OF THE VALLEY.



CURSING SAVAGELY, THE SERGEANT GLANCED HOPELESSLY ROUND FOR SOME AVENUE OF ESCAPE.



CORPORAL TANNER HAD BEEN BADLY MAULED BY THE FIRST WITHERING BURST OF FIRE BUT HE WAS NOT A MAN TO DIE EASILY.



THE CORPORAL'S VOICE TRAILED AWAY TO SILENCE... BRADY WAS ON HIS OWN.

The Jaws of Death

FOR A MOMENT, THE BIG MAN HESITATED. THEN HE STARTED TO WORM HIS WAY UP TOWARDS THE RIDGE...



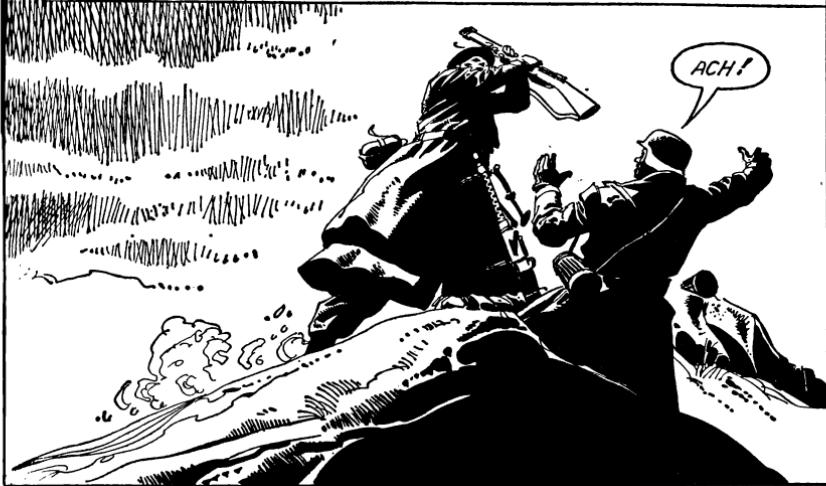
INTENT ON THEIR MURDEROUS TASK, THE GERMAN GUNNERS DID NOT SEE THE THREAT EDGING TOWARDS THEM, UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.



The Jaws of Death

25

FRANTICALLY, THE GERMAN TRAVESED THE GUN, BUT ALREADY BRADY WAS HUNTING AT HIM...



AT THAT MOMENT, THE GERMANS GAINED THEIR OUTFLANKING POSITION AND BEGAN THEIR LAST CHARGE.



The Jaws of Death

BUT EVEN AS THE GERMANS STORMED TRIUMPHANTLY FORWARD, BRADY SENT A HAIL OF DEATH SCYTHING ALONG THEIR RANKS.



The Jaws of Death

.27

BRADY LUMBERED UP AND SMILED
WILEPISHLY AT THE LIEUTENANT.

I DONE WHAT
THE CORPORAL
SAID, SIR. . . WAS
IT ALL RIGHT?

ALL
RIGHT? IT WAS
A FIRST-CLASS
SHOW, BRADY! I'LL
SEE IT DOESN'T PASS
WITHOUT
RECOGNITION.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL NIGHTFALL THAT THE
SECTION REGAINED THEIR OWN LINES.
BY THEN, THE COMPANY H. Q. WAS
LOCATED IN AN OLD CHATEAU.

WIPING OUT
A JERRY PATROL
IN YOUR FIRST
ACTION, EH?
GOOD SHOW,
WILSON!



NO THANKS
TO ME, SIR!
IF BRADY HADN'T
CAPTURED THAT
SPANDAU, IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN ANOTHER
STORY. I'D LIKE TO
PUT HIM UP FOR A
STRIPE IN PLACE OF
CORPORAL TANNER.

MAJOR NORTHAM
DID NOT ANSWER
FOR A MOMENT.
THEN...

THANK YOU,
SIR. HE'S EARNED
HIS CHANCE!

I'M NOT CERTAIN IT'S A WISE
CHOICE, LIEUTENANT—BUT IT'S
YOUR PLATOON. IF YOU FEEL HE
CAN MAKE THE GRADE,
I WON'T STAND IN
THE WAY.

The Jaws of Death



The Jaws of Death

29

TO BRADY, THE AWARD OF THE STRIPE WAS SOMETHING BEYOND HIS WILDEST DREAMS.

IS THAT RIGHT, IKE WANTS YOU UP AT S.H.A.E.F., CORPORAL BRADY? HE AINT LISTENING, SPUD! TOO BUSY WITH ALL THEM PROBLEMS OF HIGH COMMAND ON HIS MIND, I RECKON.

OKAY YOU LOT! OUTSIDE ON THE DOUBLE - AIRCRAFT RED ALERT!

ALARM WHISTLES RENT THE AIR AS THE MEN STUMBED HASTILY FROM THEIR BILLETS...

BIT OF A RUM DO, THE LUFTWAFFE SHOWING UP LIKE THIS! THOUGHT WE'D SHOT ALL THEIR KITES OUT O' THE SKY MONTHS AGO!

THIS ONE SOUNDS IN TROUBLE, MATE. HARK AT ITS ENGINE!

SUDDENLY THE PLANE BROKE THROUGH THE SNOW-LADEN CLOUD AND TWO SEARCHLIGHTS INSTANTLY FASTENED ON TO IT.

A TRANSPORT AND SHE'S IN TROUBLE! LOOK, THE UNDERCARRIAGE IS DOWN. SHE'S TRYING TO LAND!

OPEN FIRE!

The Jaws of Death

THE GERMAN PLANE WAS LOSING HEIGHT RAPIDLY AND THE GUNS SHUT OFF AS IT DROPPED BELOW THEIR TRAJECTORY.



THEY FOUND THE GERMAN TRANSPORT LYING CRUMPLED IN THE CENTRE OF A LARGE FIELD.

SPREAD OUT, MEN, AND SURROUND IT!



The Jaws of Death

31

THE SERGEANT WAS THE FIRST TO REACH THE STRICKEN PLANE. THE ONLY GERMAN ABOARD WAS DEAD...

THEY CAN'T
HAVE GOT FAR! GONE
TO GROUND IN THAT COPSE,
BY THE LOOK OF IT. CORPORAL
WINDHOY, SPREAD YOUR SECTION
OUT TO COVER THE FLANK.
THE REST OF YOU,
WITH ME.

RIGHT,
SERGEANT!



BRADY WAS DESPERATELY
ANXIOUS TO LIVE UP TO
HIS NEW RANK.

DON'T
NONE O' YOU
BLOKES LET
'EM SLIP
THROUGH!

STOP WORKING
YOURSELF INTO A
SWEAT. IT AIN'T
ADOLF HIMSELF
WE'VE GOT
CORNERED.

SOMETHING'S
MOVING - OVER
THERE, TO THE LEFT
OF THAT BIG
OAK!

THREE FIGURES DETACHED THEMSELVES
FROM THE SHADOWS OF THE WOODS AND
BRADY MADE A WILD GRAB FOR THE
BREN AND TRIGGERED OFF A LONG
BURST.

NEIN,
KAMERÄDEN,
NEIN!



The Jaws of Death

WHEN BRADY REACHED THE GERMANS, SERGEANT GRANT TURNED ANGRILY ON HIM.



BRADY TURNED AND SLUNK AWAY, THE CAUSTIC REMARKS OF THE PLATOON BURNING IN HIS EARS.



The Jaws of Death

33

IT WAS ACID IN THE SERGEANT'S
VOICE AS HE MADE HIS REPORT TO
LIEUTENANT WILSON.

... THEN BRADY RAN
FORWARD WITH THE BREM,
AND CUT DOWN THE THREE
OF 'EM. I'LL MAKE OUT
THE CHARGE SHEET
AGAINST HIM
NOW.



RED-FACED, THE SERGEANT GRATED OUT
HIS REPLY.

IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, SIR—
BUT THAT MAN'S A MENACE TO THE
PLATOON. SOMEDAY HE'LL DROP US RIGHT
IN THE DIRT, OR
MY NAME'S NOT
GRANT!



STILL SEETHING WITH RAGE, SERGEANT GRANT MADE HIS WAY ACROSS TO THE PLATOON BILLETS.

YOU'RE DEAD
LUCKY YOU AIN'T ON
THE CARPET, BRADY!
STEP OUT O' LINE
AGAIN, AND I'LL
THROW THE BOOK
AT YOU!

Y-YES,
SERGEANT.



The Jaws of Death

QUINCE SIDLED UP TO THE CRESTFALLEN BRADY...

YOU MARK MY WORDS, BOXER. THAT JOKER'S GOING TO MAKE IT SO HOT FOR YOU, YOU'LL WISH YOU'D NEVER DRAWN BREATH!



BY FIRST LIGHT THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THREE PLATOON WAS ONCE AGAIN ON THE MOVE.

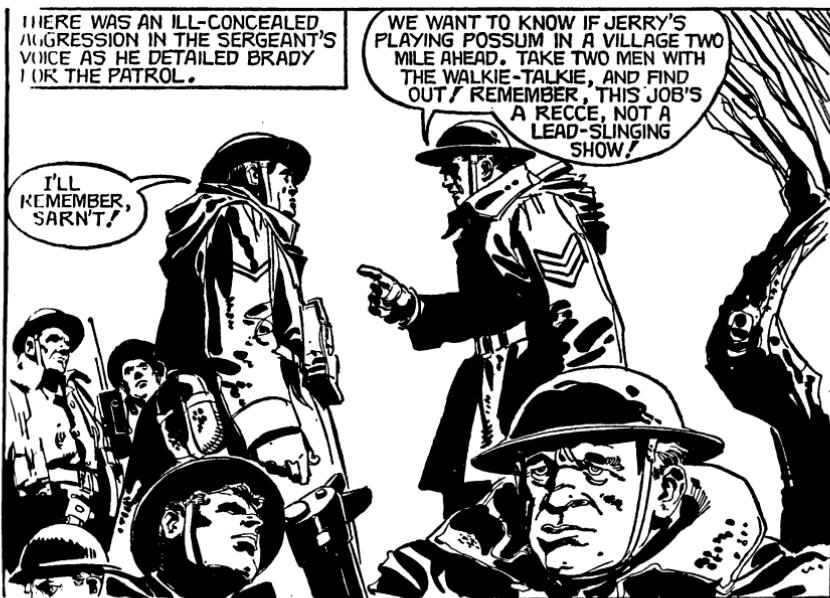
NOT MUCH CHANCE OF FIREWORKS TODAY, SERGEANT. CONTACT WITH JERRY HAS BEEN LOST ALL ALONG THE FRONT. WE'RE TO OCCUPY THE VILLAGE OF KOLBOURG. SHOULD BE A PIECE OF CAKE.

MAYBE, SIR...



The Jaws of Death

35



The Jaws of Death

IN A STOLID SILENCE, BRADY LED QUINCE AND ANOTHER MAN ON AHEAD.

I WOULDN'T LIKE TO BE
IN BOXER'S SHOES, EH, TAFFY?
I RECKON SERGEANT GRANT AIN'T
GOING TO LET UP TILL HE'S GOT
THE BULLET.



YEAH! WELL, WHY
DIDN'T HE DO THIS
RECCE HIMSELF? I'LL
TELL YOU, BOXER- IT'S
CAUSE HE WANTS YOU
ON THE RECEIVING END
OF A CHUNK O' JERRY LEAD.

RECKON SID'S RIGHT-
IT AIN'T FAIR
SENDING A
NEW BLOKE
LIKE YOU ON
THIS JOB,

THERE'S THE
VILLAGE NOW,
COME ON!

KOLBOURG LAY IN A DEATHLY SILENCE. SEVERAL TIMES, BRADY GLANCED UNEASILY AROUND THEM ...

TURN IT UP,
BOXER! YOU'RE
LETTING THIS PLACE
GET UNDER YOUR SKIN.
IT'S AS DEAD AS A
DODO.

I GOT A FEELIN'
WE'RE BEING
WATCHED!



Chapter 3. Turn of the Tide

AT THAT MOMENT THEY WERE ONLY A HAIR'S BREADTH FROM DEATH. FATE DECIDED BY HAUPTMANN VON JUNGBLUTH, THE FANATICAL COMMANDER OF A COMPANY OF THE NOTORIOUS S.S. GUARDS.

NEIN, FELDWEBEL—HOLD YOUR FIRE! WE ARE AFTER BIGGER GAME. HAVE PATIENCE AND OUR GUNS SHALL REAP A RICHER HARVEST.



CAUTIOUSLY, THE THREE MEN EDGED THEIR WAY DEEPER INTO THE ABANDONED VILLAGE. THEY SPOKE IN HISSED WHISPERS AS THOUGH THE ISOLATE HOUSES THEMSELVES STOOD LISTENING.

THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE SHAKES!

THINK WE OUGHT TO HAVE A DECOU AT THEM MINE WORKINGS?

THERE AINT BEEN NO-ONE HERE FOR DAYS! WHISTLE UP THE PLATOON AND LET'S HAVE A BIT O' COMPANY TO CHEER THINGS UP.



The Jaws of Death

EVEN AS BRADY'S SIGNAL CRACKLED THROUGH THE STATIC — A DEADLY TRAP WAS CLOSING AROUND KOLBOURG.



A MILE AND A HALF BACK DOWN THE ROAD, THE LIEUTENANT SMILED WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS FROM THE WIRELESS OPERATOR.



The Jaws of Death

39

1001 IT WAS A NOTE OF RELIEF IN
PENNY'S VOICE AS HE SAW THE
PLATOON SWING INTO SIGHT.



AT A BRISK PACE, THE PLATOON STRUCK
OVER THE LAST FIVE HUNDRED YARDS OF
OPEN GROUND, BUT NAZI EYES FOLLOWED
THEIR PROGRESS GREEDILY.



1002 CAPTAIN'S ARM DROPPED AND THE
GRENADIER MAN MACHINE GUNS OPENED UP IN A
WILDED CHANT OF DEATH.



The Jaws of Death

VICIOUS LINES OF TRACER LASHING THROUGH THEIR RANKS, THE PLATOON DIVED
FRANTICALLY FOR COVER.



THE FIRING DIED TO A SPORADIC CHATTER AND A HARSH
VOICE RANG OUT.



The Jaws of Death

41

FOR LIEUTENANT WILSON IT WAS A MOMENT OF BITTER IGNOMINY. SLOWLY, HE ROSE TO HIS FEET.

WE'VE HAD IT, SERGEANT! I CAN'T LET THESE MEN GET BUTCHERED.

ALL RIGHT, LADS, WE'RE LICKED! LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!



BRADY WATCHED IN HORROR...

I-I LED 'EM STRAIGHT INTO A TRAP! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, SID?

ONLY ONE THING TO DO, MATE—WE SCARPER!



NUMB WITH DISMAY, BRADY TURNED DAZED EYES TOWARDS QUINCE.

WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE 'EM, SID!

IT'S EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF IN THIS GAME! THEY'VE HAD THEIR CHIPS AND WE AIN'T!

HANG ON! I'M NOT LEAVING OUR MATES IN TROUBLE!



The Jaws of Death

QUINCE MOVED THEN — MERCILESSLY AND WITH THE SPEED OF A STRIKING COBRA. TAFFY MORGAN CRUMPLED SLOWLY, SHOT IN THE HEART.



AT BAYONET POINT, THE BRITISH PRISONERS WERE FORCED DOWN THE MINE SHAFT INTO A WELL-LIT GALLERY...



The Jaws of Death

43

NAZI CAPTAIN SPOKE FAULTLESS ENGLISH, BUT HIS EYES BLAZED WITH HATRED.

WE WILL BE UNABLE TO ENTERTAIN YOU FOR LONG. SOME OF YOUR COMRADES HAVE ESCAPED, SO WE ARE FORCED TO EVACUATE OUR HIDING-PLACE. UNFORTUNATELY, YOU MUST REMAIN HERE, PERMANENTLY!



YOU CAN DEMAND NOTHING! THOSE WHO DARE TO MARCH AGAINST THE FATHERLAND, MUST PAY FOR THE PRIVILEGE. TAKE THEM AWAY!



The Jaws of Death

URGED ON BY BLOWS FROM RIFLE BUTTS, THE BRITISH PRISONERS WERE CROWDED INTO A SMALL BLIND GALLERY OF A WORKED-OUT COAL SEAM.

WHEN THIS HAS BURNT OUT,
YOU WILL NOT BE NEEDING LIGHT,
AUF WIEDERSHEN, KAMERADEN!

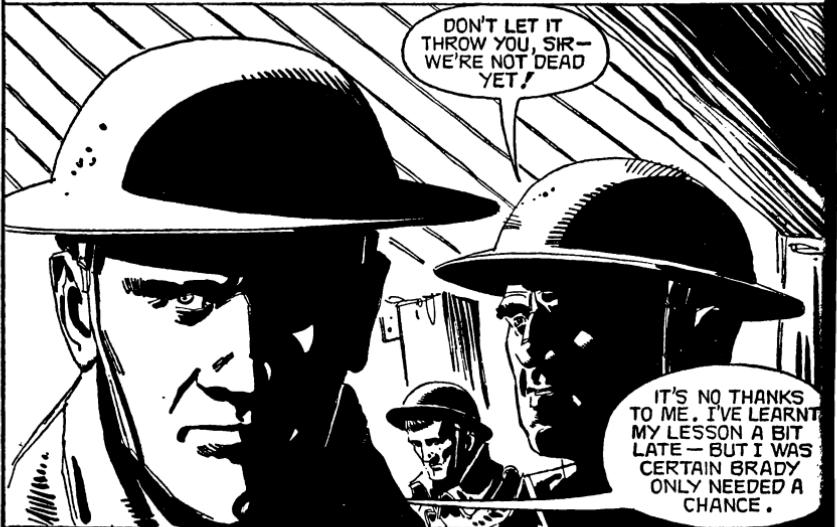
YOU
MURDEROUS
SWINE!



THE MASSIVE DOOR SLAMMED WITH A GRIM FINALITY ON THE ENTOMBED MEN.
THE SERGEANT GLANCED ACROSS AT MICHAEL WILSON.

DON'T LET IT
THROW YOU, SIR—
WE'RE NOT DEAD
YET!

IT'S NO THANKS
TO ME. I'VE LEARNT
MY LESSON A BIT
LATE—BUT I WAS
CERTAIN BRADY
ONLY NEEDED A
CHANCE.



The Jaws of Death

45

SERGEANT GRANT'S FACE TWISTED INTO AN IRONICAL SMILE.

WE'VE ALL GOT TO LEARN - IT'S JUST THAT SOME LESSONS COME A BIT HARD. STILL, I'D LIKE TO LAY MY HANDS ON CORPORAL BRADY FOR A FEW MINUTES!



FOR BEST PART OF TWO MILES, BRADY STUMBLED BEHIND QUINCE AS THEY FLOGGED ACROSS COUNTRY AT A GRUELING PACE. THEN HE BEGAN TO SLOW - UNTIL HE STOPPED ALTOGETHER.

(NO USE DESERTING LIKE THIS, SID. WE'VE GOT TO GO BACK ! AN' STICK OUR NAPPERS STRAIGHT IN THE NOOSE ? LEAVE THE THINKING TO ME, BOXER, AN' YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.



BUT BRADY WAS STUBBORN NOW IN HIS DECISION. FOR THE FIRST TIME HE HAD BEEN GIVEN A POSITION OF TRUST, AND HE HAD FAILED.

YOU PUSH ON IF YOU WANT, SID - I'M GOING BACK !

IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, BOXER !

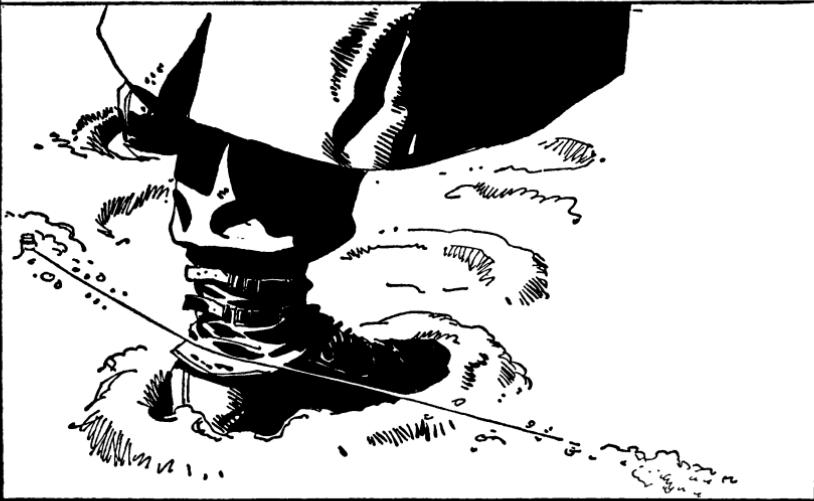


The Jaws of Death

FOR QUINCE IT WAS DIFFERENT, A COMRADE LAY DEAD, CUT DOWN BY A .303 BULLET. QUINCE WAS ALREADY PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN...

...BUT I CAN'T AFFORD TO LEAVE WITNESSES WANDERING LOOSE—AN' DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES!

QUINCE TOOK A HALF-PACE BACKWARDS AS HE AIMED CAREFULLY AT THE BURLY BACK OF BRADY...



The Jaws of Death

47

IT NEEDED ONLY A TOUCH ON THE TRIP WIRE — AND THE SCHUMINE EXPLODED SAVAGELY.

AAAGH!



BRADY STOOD IN SILENCE, GAZING AT THE DEEP, JAGGED HOLE TORN IN THE ICE.



THE OVERCAST SKY WAS AGAIN SHEDDING ITS HEAVY LOAD AS BRADY REACHED HIGH GROUND OVERLOOKING KOLBOURG.



The Jaws of Death

USING EVERY INCH OF "DEAD" GROUND, HE WORKED HIS WAY DOWN UNTIL HE WAS CLOSE IN AMONG THE MINE BUILDINGS.



DESPERATELY, BRADY SEARCHED FOR SOME MEANS OF DIVERTING THE GERMANS' ATTENTION.



The Jaws of Death

49

WITH A STARTLED OATH, ONE OF THE NAZIS SPUN ROUND AS BRADY'S SNOWBALL SPLATTERED AGAINST THE BACK OF HIS NECK.



THE NAZI STRODE ANGRILY ROUND THE BUILDING — AND NEVER EVEN SENSED THE SLEDGEHAMMER BLOW THAT POLE-AXED HIM



THE OTHER GERMAN WAS STILL CURSING AND RAKING SNOW FROM HIS COLLAR WHEN HE HEARD THE SNAP OF A RIFLE BEHIND HIM.



The Jaws of Death



THERE WAS A NEW FOUND ASSURANCE IN THE LANCE-CORPORAL AS HE MOVED WARILY INTO THE MINE SHAFT.



The Jaws of Death

51

AHEAD, A LIGHT PIERCED THE GLOOM AND GUSTS OF RAUCOUS LAUGHTER ECHOED ALONG THE PASSAGE. BRADY EASED A 36 MILLS BOMB FROM HIS POUCH.



The Jaws of Death

THEN DEATH CAME HURTLING FROM THE SHADOWS ...



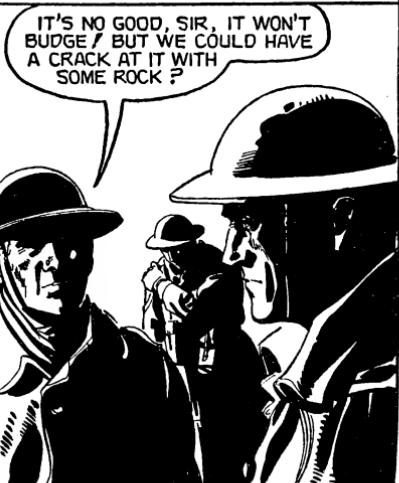
THERE WAS AN EAR-SPLITTING DETONATION AND A LONG CONVULSIVE SHUDDER RAN THROUGH THE MINE AS THE WHOLE OF THE GALLERY CAVED IN.



TO THE TRAPPED MEN OF THE PLATOON, THE MUTED ROAR OF THE EXPLOSION SOUNDED LIKE THEIR DEATH KNELL.



THE TWO MEN THREW THEIR WEIGHT AGAINST THE DOOR, BUT IT REMAINED STOLIDLY DEFIAINT.



The Jaws of Death

53

SERGEANT GRANT'S VOICE ADDED AN OMINOUS CHILL TO THE ATMOSPHERE.



HIS NERVES IN SHREDS, A YOUNG INFANTRYMAN FLUNG HIMSELF AGAINST THE DOOR.



The Jaws of Death

IT WAS THE FRENZIED HAMMERING THAT ROUSED BRADY FROM HIS STUPOR.



BUT THE GRENADE HAD NOT KILLED ALL THE S.S. MEN. HAUPTMANN VON JUNGBLUTH RAISED HIS LUGER AS HE SAW BRADY COME GROPING DOWN THE SHAFT.



The Jaws of Death

55

THE LUGER SPAT FLAME AND BRADY FELT A SEARING PAIN LANCE THROUGH HIS CHEST. BUT EVEN AS HE CRUMPLED, HE TRIGGERED OFF TWO QUICK SHOTS.



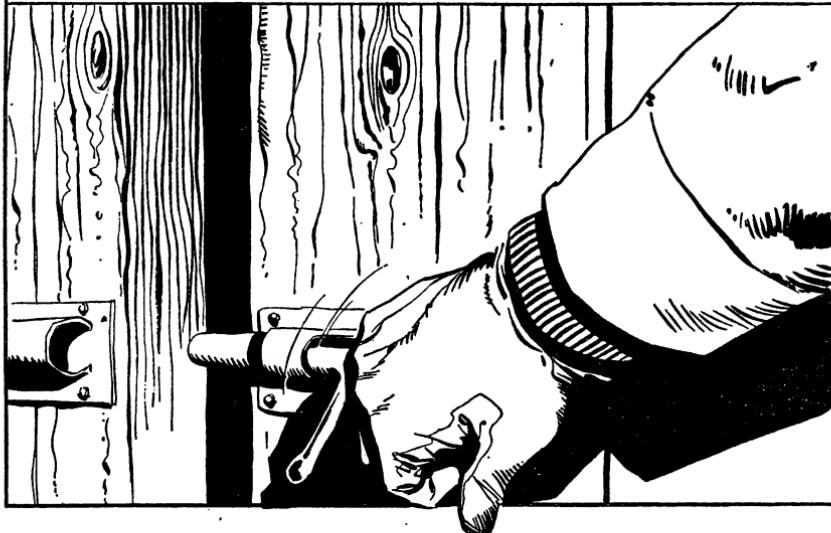
A FILMY MIST WAS FORMING ACROSS BRADY'S EYES. VAGUELY HE COULD SEE A DOOR ONLY TEN FEET AWAY AND HEAR A KNOCKING THAT HELD A DESPERATE URGENCY.

GOT... GOT
TO MAKE IT...



The Jaws of Death

TWICE HIS FAST-NUMBING FINGERS FAILED TO SHIFT THE HEAVY, RUSTED BOLT. THEN, WITH A FINAL TORTURED EFFORT, HE WRENCHED IT FREE.



THE BODY OF THE NAZI OFFICER AND THE TRAIL OF BLOOD TOLD A SILENT BUT HEROIC TALE.



The Jaws of Death

57

FOR A MOMENT, BRADY RALLIED HIS FAILING STRENGTH. WILSON BENT CLOSE TO CATCH THE FAINT WHISPER OF HIS VOICE.



BRADY SIGHED PEACEFULLY AND HE WAS SMILING WHEN HIS EYES CLOSED.

BRADY HAD BEEN A SIMPLE MAN AND THE ROUGH CROSS THAT MARKED HIS RESTING PLACE BORE A SIMPLE EPITAPH.



The Jaws of Death

IN THOSE LAST FEW DAYS, WAR AND THE TRAGEDY OF ONE LONELY MAN HAD ROBBED LIEUTENANT MICHAEL WILSON OF HIS CALLOW YOUTHFULNESS—BUT THE PLATOON HAD GAINED AN OFFICER WHO WAS FIT TO LEAD THEM.



COMMAND PERFORMANCE

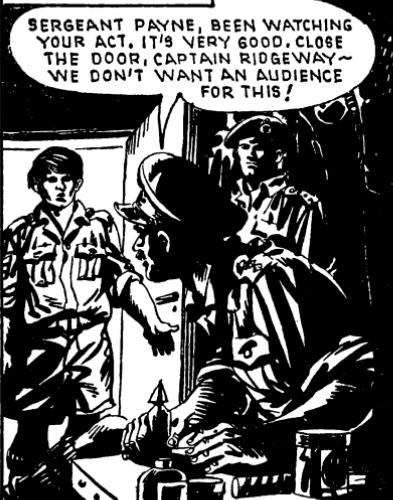
BERT PAYNE WAS AN ENTERTAINER, SO WHEN HE JOINED UP, THEY MADE HIM SERGEANT AND PUT HIM IN AN ENSA TROOP . . .

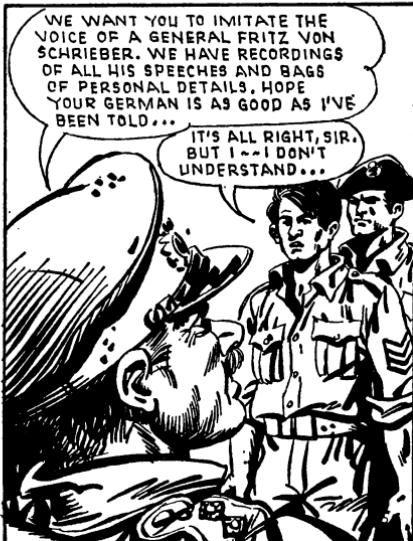


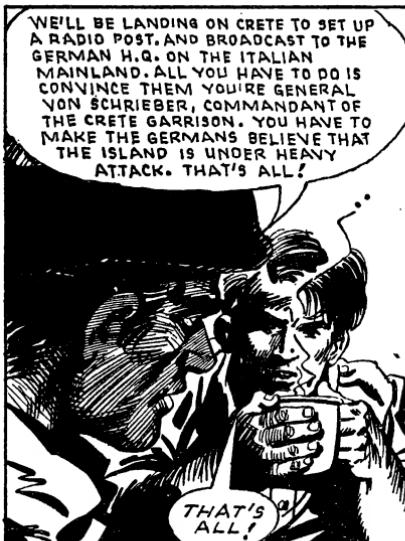
PAYNE HAD NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT HIS INSIGNIFICANT PART IN THE WAR . . .

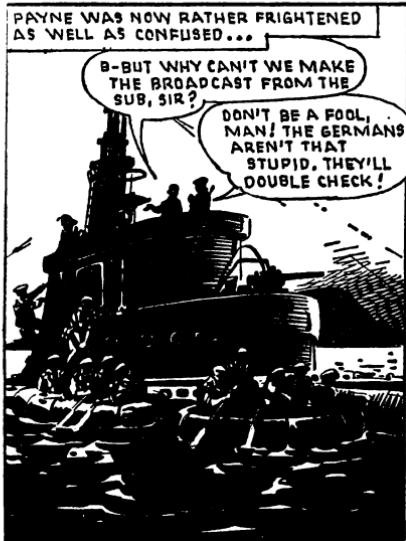


WHEN PAYNE REACHED HIS MAKESHIFT DRESSING ROOM . . .









ON THE HOUR EXACTLY, THEY HEARD THE DISTANT RUMBLE OF BOMBING.



BERT PAYNE SPENT SEVENTY NAIL-BITING MINUTES WAITING FOR THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN RIDGEWAY...

THE R.A.F. DID THEIR BIT! TAKE JERRY DAYS TO PATCH UP THAT RADIO AGAIN. THERE ISN'T ANOTHER LONG RANGE TRANSMITTER ON THIS ISLAND ~ EXCEPT OURS! READY, PAYNE?



LATER THAT SAME DAY, A GERMAN H.Q. BASE IN SICILY PICKED UP AN URGENT CALL.

ACHTUNG! THIS IS AN EMERGENCY! WE ARE UNDER HEAVY ATTACK. PARATROOPS ARE DROPPING...



AND ON CRETE, BERT PAYNE FELT EXHAUSTED AFTER THE
MOST EXACTING PERFORMANCE OF HIS CAREER . . .



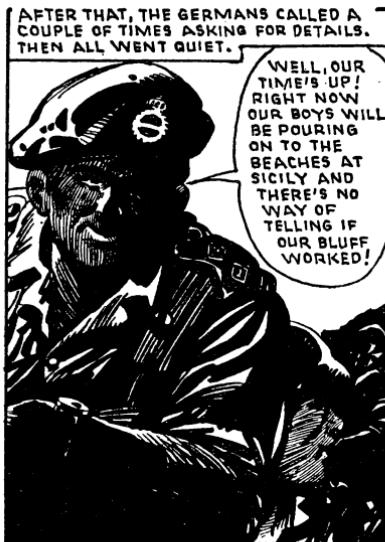
I EXPECT YOU ARE WONDERING WHAT ALL THESE ANTICS ARE ABOUT. IN ANOTHER EIGHT HOURS, OUR TROOPS WILL BE HITTING THE SICILY BEACHES. YOUR JOB WAS TO MAKE THE ENEMY THINK THE ATTACK IS COMING HERE!



WE KNOW JERRY HAS TWO CRACK DIVISIONS ON SICILY. IF WE CAN DIVERT THEM HERE ~ TO STOP AN INVASION . . .

NOW I UNDERSTAND! AND WE STAY HERE TILL OUR TROOPS HAVE LANDED IN SICILY, I SUPPOSE!



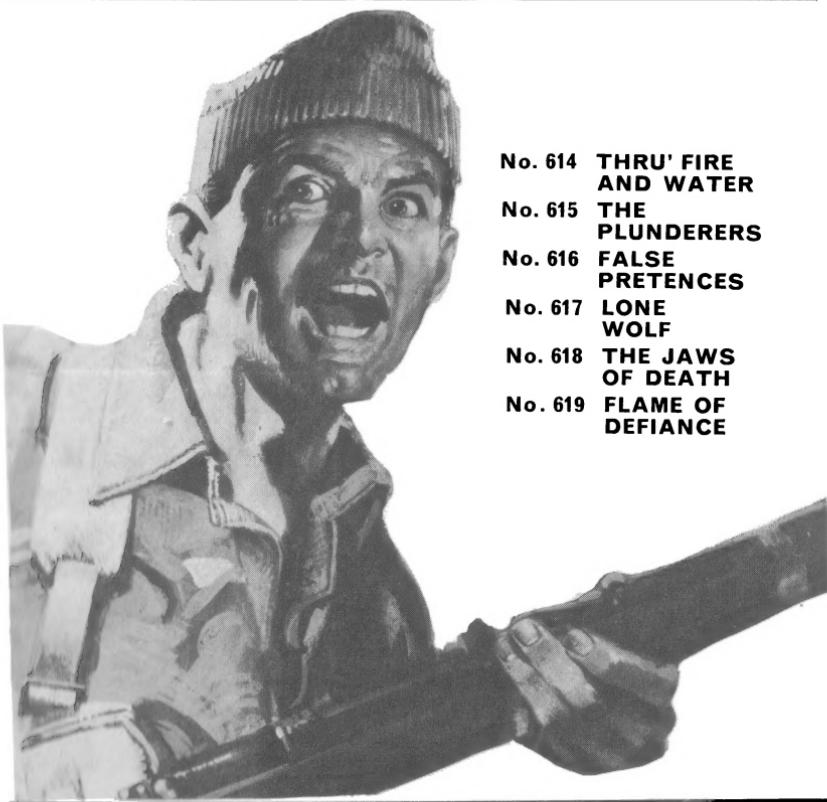




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